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Best Places to Visit in December 2023 (India): Top 29 Places

In December, witness a magical transformation in India's diverse landscapes. Explore the best places to visit in December, from snowy northern mountains to dazzling southern beaches. Kolkata hosts one of the world's biggest holiday bashes, while Rajasthan's Jaisalmer and Jodhpur sparkle with festive colors under star-studded skies.

Whether you love snowy adventures, beach bliss, temple gatherings, jungle safaris or just soaking festive vibes, December in India has special seasonal delights for every type of happy wanderer! Here are 31 handpicked destinations promising memorable travel moments this winter month.

1. Best Place to Visit in December - Shimla



As icy blankets drape the Himalayan slopes around Himachal Pradesh, the reigning queen of India's hill stations, Shimla shaped like an amphitheatre embracing seven scenic hills transforms into a magical winter wonderland. Take heritage walks through quaint pedestrian lanes and get cozy beside bonfires. Or glide over frozen landscapes on Asia's longest ski-lift pumping adrenaline through adventurous veins.

Best Experiences: Asia's longest ski lift adventures, heritage walks, Himalayan views

2. Dreamy Snow Globes of Kufri & Narkanda



Experience picture-perfect valleys transforming into magical frozen snow globes around offbeat hamlets like Kufri and Narkanda neighboring Shimla. With fewer tourists and affordable prices, these peaceful pahadi villages make the ideal bets for couples and families to roll snowballs, sip piping ginger tea, and sink into the quiet beauty of lesser-known Himalayan hideaways, making them some of the best places to visit in December.

Best Experiences: snow adventures, mountain views, rural village life

3. Majestic Virgin Slopes of Gulmarg & Auli



Up the adventure ante by conquering the majestic virgin powder thrills skiing and snowboarding down long undisturbed slopes in Gulmarg and Auli with mighty surrounding peaks like Nanga Parbat framing unbelievable vistas along Kashmir and Uttarakhand's remote Himalayan terrains.

Best Experiences: virgin ski slopes, towering Himalayan peaks

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4. Nostalgic Rail Journeys Across Kangra Valley



Take heritage winter rail journeys back in time aboard the narrow-gauge Kangra Valley Railway, built across Himachal Pradesh's Dhauladhar mountain range spurs during the British Raj era. The slow ride, winding through quintessential Indian village tableaux surrounded by snow-dusted valleys, promises lifetime travel memories in some of the best places to visit in December.

Best Experiences: heritage railway, Himalayan views, rural life

5. Fabled Beauty of Ladakh's Snow Leopards



For those daring subzero chills, remote Hemis National Park within gorgeous Ladakh allows rare opportunities tracking the endangered snow leopard through winter months led by expert naturalists. Small groups spend days roaming the region's starkly beautiful Trans-Himalayan terrain higher than 13,000 feet spotting these elusive cloud-like big cats in their natural habitat.

Best Experiences: snow leopard tracking, Himalayan landscapes

6. Beachside Christmas Sparkle of Goa



Few places on Earth exude festive beachside charm as vividly as Goa and Mumbai when December dawns. Palm dotted beaches like Anjuna and Vagator hang Christmas lights while Panaji city illuminates the stunning Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church and riverside historic Latin Quarter streets. Catch Saturday Night Markets on Anjuna Beach featuring neon carnival rides plus food and flea stalls or join the packed local midnight mass under the stars at heritage Portuguese churches to immerse in nostalgic Christmas atmospherics unlike anywhere else!

Best Experiences: Christmas lights, heritage churches, beach parties

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7. Mumbai's Glam Bollywood Holiday Spirit



Over in India's financial powerhouse Mumbai, various suburban enclaves like Bandra and Colaba sparkle putting up elaborate nativity scenes with twinkling holiday lights. Join the dressed up crowds at heritage Holy Name Cathedral's glorious midnight mass then dine on exotic celebratory menus at many trendy restaurants and glitzy nightclubs across town often themed on Bollywood dishing exclusive holiday entertainment with much fanfare.

Best Experiences: Bollywood style Christmas, cathedral services, parties

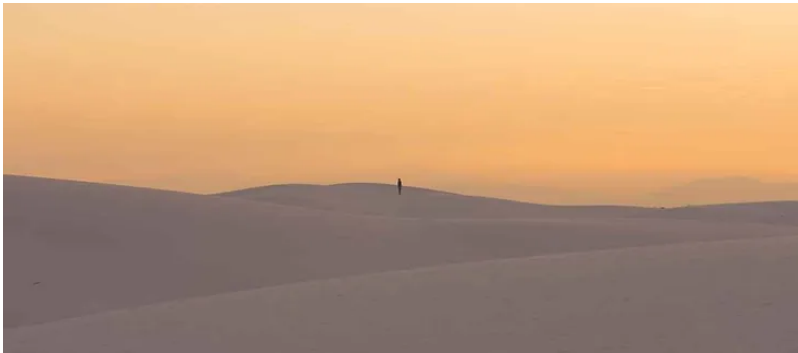
8. Divine Gatherings Across Gorgeous Temples



India shines most serenely during annual spiritual festivals at ornate temples everywhere. Bom Jesu Basilica beside Old Goa's historic Portuguese churches and ruins hosts thousands for sparkling candlelit processions on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Non-Christians also join the stunning Marian tribute. Down south, Isha Yoga Center's socially distanced yet collective temple spaces allow meditative inspiration around the New Year seeking balanced beginnings in some of the best places to visit in December.

Best Experiences: spiritual processions, meditative spaces

9. Camel Fantasia Across Rajasthani Vistas



Beyond chaotic urban revelries, Rajasthan's famed desert cities host vivid cultural festivals against evocative amber hued sand dunes vistas through December. For magical desert trip perspectives, experience annual events like the quirky Camel Festivals across Bikaner and Jaisalmer showcasing folk dancers, musicians and competitions playing out before brilliant desert sunrises.

Best Experiences: camel culture, music festivals, desert views

10. Dance Night Away at Alsisar Mahal



After sunset when a thousand twinkling desert stars illuminate Rajasthan's dark dusky skies, regal 17th century palace Alsisar Mahal and its sprawling courtyard grounds fill with music lovers during the iconic Magnetic Fields festival hosted early December. Sip craft gin cocktails poolside at this boutique heritage hotel then dance into the night against glowing cinematic sandstone setpieces. A not-to-be-missed magical music experience!

Best Experiences: music festival, heritage hotel luxury

11. Backwater Bliss & Beachy Vibes Along Southern India



Laidback destinations like Kovalam and Varkala promise peak beach weather and chilled vibes all through December. Unwind beneath Kovalam's swaying palms near the iconic red and white striped Lighthouse Beach attraction. Try group yoga overlooking brilliant red skies at Varkala Temple cliff tops where chanting sessions unfold at sunset. Or spot kingfisher birds along Kerala's palm fringed backwater channels offering a blissfully slower rhythm retreating from chaotic urban environments.

Best Experiences: backwaters, beaches, sunsets

12. Spot Exotic Wildlife Deep Inside Silent Valleys



In December, witness a watery spectacle as the North East Monsoon bids adieu to Kerala's Silent Valley National Park. Cascading waterfalls and mist-draped rainforests create a mesmerizing canvas. Elusive lion-tailed macaque families make rare appearances, offering unique glimpses. Guided park hikes provide close encounters, and nearby Nelliampathy hill station beckons with forest-themed wellness therapies. Immerse in this aquatic haven—one of the best places to visit in December.

Best Experiences: wildlife spotting, forest hikes, wellness therapies

13. Epic Jeep Safaris Spotting Tigers in Bandhavgarh



Safari season sparks high anticipation come December when dried foliage allows improved visibility across various parks and reserves. For best success spotting the majestic yet elusive

Royal Bengal Tiger in its natural habitat, take guided jeep safaris inside Central India's star destination Bandhavgarh National Park within Madhya Pradesh state or ask experienced naturalists to discover surrounding parks and reserves protecting these endangered big cats populations as part of thrilling jungle adventures.

Best Experiences: tiger safaris, wildlife photography

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14. Immerse in Indian Cultural Festivals



From the Odissi dance extravaganzas at Konark Sun Temple against intricate stone carvings to the soul stirring December Margazhi music celebrations hosted annually in storied Chennai concert halls called Sabhas, India's cities showcase distinct classical art traditions honed over centuries. Foodies indulge seasonal mango harvests at Mumbai's iconic Crawford Market warehouse or devour fragrant Christmas plum cakes from 19th century Nahoum's Jewish Bakery towards wrapping up the year with sweetness!

Best Experiences: music festivals, dance rituals, local flavours

15. Stand Tall Beside Ancient Hyderabad Mosques



Standing tall since the 16th century Qutb Shahi Dynasty era, the Iranian geometric style Charminar Mosque and Mecca Masjid built by historic rulers continue dazzling architecture fans over important festive days. Indeed the four arches soaring almost 50 meters over the city coupled with ornately carved brick detailing hold fascinating backstories to uncover on expert guided tours of these incredible mosque marvels constructed at the very founding of Hyderabad.

Best Experiences: Islamic architecture, city views, history

16. Sea Temples of Mahabalipuram's Majestic Era



Wander ruins spanning the ancient port city of Mahabalipuram's spectacular UNESCO designated sites to admire intricately carved seaborne granite rock temples and bas relief sculptures that almost appear like stone lace. This seaside temple town transports minds back to South India's majestic 7th-9th century Pallava Dynasty reign era when these remarkably preserved artistic wonders emerged across what became an important harbor.

Best Experiences: UNESCO sites, temple architecture, coastal history

17. Crumbling Chettinadu Palace Ghosts



Chettinadu's splendidly fading mansions with kitschy Marilyn Monroe prints offer glimpses into the opulence of elite Southern banking aristocracies during the British Raj era peppering the countryside with crumbling estate ruins. While many palatial homes remain abandoned, several like Visalam Palace welcome guests to stay and cycle little known village temple trails to still thriving settlements with quirky antique shops and demonstrating what continues uniquely preserved of a very regional Chettinad cuisine attracting gastro tourists.

Best Experiences: palace hotels, cycling, Chettinad cuisine

18. Kayaking & Canoeing Along Lush Kerala Networks



No December escape feels more serenely blissful than experiencing Kerala's lush palm fringed backwater channels by kayak, canoe, houseboat or simply by foot around tiny villages. Paddle silently witnessing rural vignettes drift by - temple parades, harvest barges and flashes of brilliant kingfisher birds who call these peaceful waters home. Let stress float away amid the relaxing tableau, indulging in ultra fresh flavors at shack restaurants all along the route.

Best Experiences: kayaking, village life, tropical cuisine

19. Valley of Flowers Alpine Botanical Garden



Nestled deep in West Sikkim bordering Tibet within the frosty Eastern Himalayan mountain range, Valley of Flowers National Park metamorphoses into a dazzling winter frost world. Icy atmospherics set the stage allowing rhododendron forests to erupt ablaze come spring in a colorful botanical spectacle awing intrepid December trekkers willing to withstand cold uncovering this high altitude Shangri La which promises memorable eco escapades against breathtaking backdrops.

Best Experiences: alpine trekking, frosty landscapes, spring blooms

20. Nostalgic Toy Trains Of Darjeeling

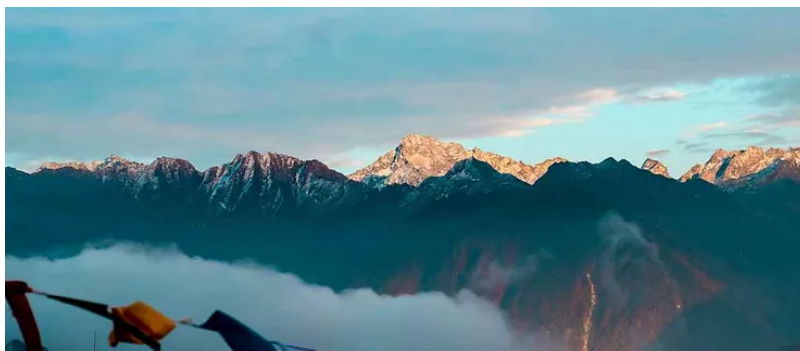


Hop into the past aboard the brilliant blue Darjeeling Himalayan Railway trains on narrow tracks. Panoramas of majestic Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak, unfold while chugging past breathtaking mountain vistas surrounding Darjeeling's hill station settlements. First established as cool Himalayan sanatorium escapes for the British Raj era elite, riding almost 80 kilometers through ever-changing terrains makes for unforgettable perspective-shifting adventures. Embark on a journey through time and landscapes in Darjeeling, undoubtedly one of the ****best places to visit in December.****

Best Experiences: UNESCO railway, Himalayan views

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21. Tribal Village Peaks Around Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh



Travellers longing to venture beyond the known towards northeast India's remotest corners near Tibet discover Shangri La worthy winter wonderlands draped in fresh powder around Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. Tribal villages here remain nestled between soaring peaks hiding ancient Buddhist sites and spectacular trekking trails, stunning newcomers by the unblemished, untouched majestic glory.

Best Experiences: offbeat villages, snow adventures, Buddhist sites

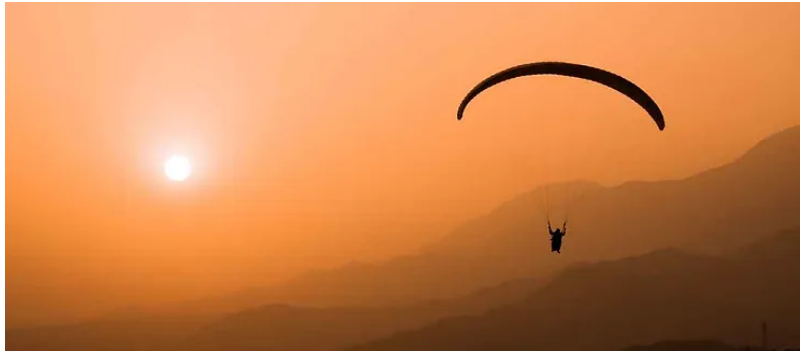
22. Beachside Wellness & Artsy Immersions Around Fort Kochi



Over 2,000 years of global trader history shape Fort Kochi's alluring antiquated harbor town allure including telltale Chinese fishing nets. But moving beyond the tourist trail uncovers wellness focused beach resorts also surrounded by tiny villages with home cooks and homestays allowing deeper connections into culture from Syrian Christian family meals to island cycling tours criss crossing scenic backwaterscapes practically unseen on mainstream group excursions.

Best Experiences: wellness resorts, cycling, culture walks

23. Paraglide Perspectives Over Bir Billing



The villages of Bir and Billing connected by adventure activity focused mountainous Himachal Pradesh terrains steeped in vibrant Tibetan culture allow days spent nature walking and stargazing. Then paraglide off Billing's world famous 14,000 foot high ridge to survey snow speckled Dhauladhar peaks from almost hovering perspective high over the town clocktower. Managed by locals, visiting empowers communities sharing the sheer magic of these still pristine panoramas.

Best Experiences: paragliding, star trails, Tibetan culture

24. Boutique Biennale Festival Across Kochi



Every two years between December to March, Kochi on the Malabar Coast transforms into a mecca for art lovers hosting India's largest contemporary arts event, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. The extensive program spans galleries in heritage properties, disused shipyards and living history archeological dig sites allowing immersive art installations against wonderfully unusual backdrops steeped in Spice Route antiquity. Stay closeby at local heritage hotels, rustic island homestays or chat with global artists volunteering across what becomes four months focused by creative energy.

Best Experiences: art festivals, heritage hotels

25. Detox Tea Garden Wellness Havens



When urban existence grows too chaotic, India's ever-expanding wellness-focused resorts promise sanctuary for frazzled nerves. In the serene coffee county of Coorg, embark on a physical detox through rejuvenating Ayurveda spa therapies and practices offered at wellness hotels like Evolve Back Resorts. These retreats blur the lines between indoors and nature, featuring private pools, open-air showers, and walking trails across acres of healing rainforests, spice gardens, and rice paddy tableaus overlooking the Western Ghats. It's not just a retreat; it's a holistic reboot for body, mind, and soul, making it one of the best places to visit in December for ultimate relaxation.

Best Experiences: Ayurveda treatments, nature resorts

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26. Udaipur's Lake Palace Fantasy Island



Like an ethereal island vision afloat, Udaipur's iconic 18th century Lake Palace Hotel seemingly floating upon serene Pichola Lake tops India bucket lists for ultra special retreats promising royal treatment inside this former Maharana pleasure palace. Beyond admiring the regal interiors and relaxing in spa indulgences, simple pleasures like boat rides on the palace lakes at sunset rekindle childlike awe, especially watching its glowing facade sparkling against the darkness like a decadent mirage.

Best Experiences: heritage hotels, lake romance

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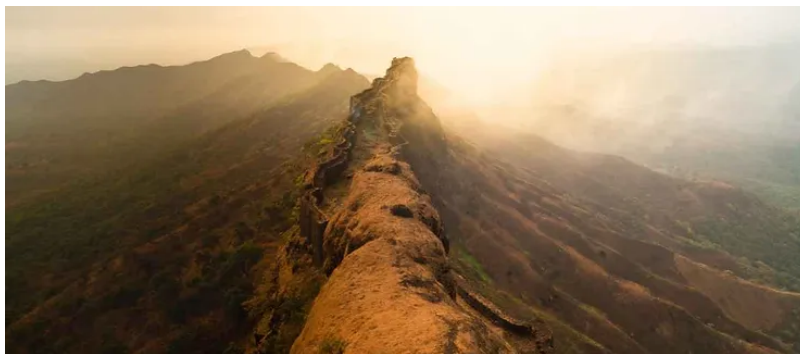
27. Catch Criss Crossing Migratory Birds



Nature lovers and birdwatching enthusiasts discover feathery paradise spotting both endemic and migratory species stopping by the lush islets and wetlands surrounding Karnataka's Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary islands along the Cauvery River. These pitstops support thousands of temporary feathered visitors flocking south escaping winter before returning home come spring. For best sightings, take early morning guided wooden boat excursions quietly admiring the sheer variety of migratory birds that concentrate in these fertile marshy environs at peak season.

Best Experiences: birdwatching, river boat trips

28. Ancient Village Secrets Near Heritage Pune



Beyond its Osho meditation ashrams and bustling metropolis foodie scenes, Pune makes an ideal base for uncovering breathtaking ancient cave temple artworks and volcanic basalt formations incredibly carved over eons naturally through intense geothermal activities into what now offers perfect outdoor rock climbing adventures. Just beyond the city fringes, a cultural patchwork quilt of tiny villages still actively nurture and showcase age old pottery crafts and weaving cottage industries wonderfully utilizing humble backyard natural resources while harmoniously demonstrating sustainable living has and continues thriving here despite increasing walls of encroaching glass high rise neighbors popping up rapidly with ongoing modernization across most of India.

Best Experiences: ancient caves, rural crafts, rock climbing

29. Surreal Performances Inside Ajanta & Ellora Caves



And finally, no mention of India's seasonal travel delights is complete without an honorable mention of the extraordinary annual Ellora Festival allowing select performances hosted inside the spellbinding UNESCO World Heritage Site blessed with 34 religious rock cut cave temples carved along a volcanic basaltic cliffside in Maharashtra sometime between 600-1000CE. The handful of specific December events staged atmospherically under this site's surreal interiors illuminated by lanterns casts fresh appreciation on the sheer artistic vision and technical mastery achieved creating such an elaborate sacred space over 1,400 years ago through ancient ingenuity and faith. Allowing staged art to channel the energy today inspires contemporizing of the past to uplift and learn from going forward - a true mind

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